

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USNMR SHAPE  
USDOCOSOUTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 0887

USNMR SHAPE FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MARR, NATO, IT  
SUBJECT: ITALY AND NATO: PRESS SPECULATIONS

1. MONDAY, JAN. 16, EDITIONS OF THREE AMONG MORE  
RESPONSIBLE ITALIAN NEWSPAPERS (CORRIERE DELLA  
SERA, LA NAZIONE, IL TEMPO) CARRY STORIES SPECULATING  
ON REACTIONS IN NATO TO POSSIBLE INCREMENT IN PCI ROLE  
IN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT.

2. LA NAZIONE FRONT PAGES "IT THE COMMUNISTS ENTER THE  
GOVERNMENT, ITALY WILL BE PLACED ON THE MARGIN OF  
NATO." REFERRING TO SOURCES IN THE NATO POLITICAL  
DIRECTORATE, AUTHOR PIERO PAOLI REPORTS THEIR JUDGMENT THAT  
IF THE PCI ENTERS THE GOVERNMENT, THE RESULT WOULD BE "A LESSER  
ENGAGEMENT OF ITALY AND CONSEQUENTLY THE RELEGATION OF OUR COUNTRY  
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TO THE SIDELINES FIRST ON THE POLITICAL LEVEL AND  
AFTERWARD ECONOMICALLY". AT THE OFFICES OF THE AMERICAN  
DELEGATION, PAOLI ASSERTS, AN OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN SAID,  
"IN FRANCE, IN ITALY OR IN SPAIN ONE HAS ALL THE  
RIGHT TO CHOOSE ONE'S OWN GOVERNMENT, NEVERTHELESS,  
WE HAVE DECLARED MANY TIMES THAT COMMUNISTS IN  
POWER INVOLVES A PRICE FOR THE ALLIANCE. THE UNITED

STATES HAS NOT CHANGED (ITS POSITION) IN THIS REGARD. IN ANY EVENT, WE HOPE THAT THAT WILL NOT HAPPEN BECAUSE THAT EVENTUALITY WOULD REPRESENT A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE OF EUROPE AND FOR ITS SECURITY. WE HAVE SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING FOR YOUR COUNTRY, BUT WE CANNOT BE INDIFFERENT TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE PCI TO THE GOVERNMENT, SO WE LOOK WITH PREOCCUPATION AT THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION".

3. IN A CORRIERE DELLA SERA ARTICLE, ARTURO GUATELLI ADDS MORE SPECIFICITY TO HIS SPECULATIONS, AGAIN BASED ON NATO SOURCES. POSSIBLE PCI PARTICIPATION IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT TAKE THE ALLIANCE BY SURPRISE, HE WRITES, SINCE THE POSSIBILITY HAS BEEN UNDER STUDY AT NATO FOR SOME MONTHS. "ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY" (HIS QUOTE) ITALY WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE NPG EVEN THOUGH IT IS A PERMANENT MEMBER OF THAT GROUP. "ACCORDING TO NATO", HE CONTINUES, ITALY COULD REACT IN TWO WAYS: DECLARE IT IS NO LONGER DISPOSED TO ACCEPT THE PRESENCE OF NUCLEAR WARHEADS "ABOUT ONE HUNDRED" NOW ON ITS SOIL, OR LEAVE THE INTEGRATED MILITARY ORGANIZATION OF THE ALLIANCE, THAT IS, ADOPTING THE SAME ATTITUDE AS FRANCE AND GREECE. QUOTING A HIGHLY PLACED NATO FUNCTIONARY, GUATELLI REPORTS "THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PCI IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVERNMENT WOULD BE A POLITICAL DEFEAT FOR THE ALLIANCE MORE THAN A STRATEGIC ONE. I DON'T BELIEVE, IN FACT, IN THE BREAKING OF THE EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN EAST AND WEST AS LONG AS THE RUSSIAN LEADERSHIP IS IN THE HANDS OF A BREZHNEV WHO IS A STATESMAN, I WOULD SAY A HUMANIST. THE DANGER IS IN THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD, EVEN THOUGH I DON'T WANT TO THINK THAT THE CONDUCT OF THE USSR COULD BE ENTRUSTED TO A MADMAN. THE PREOCCUPYING FACT REMAINS THAT COMMUNIST INFILTRATION MAKES PROGRESS IN THE WEST, WHILE THE SAME CANNOT BE SAID ABOUT THE EAST WHERE DISSENT IS OUTLAWED."

4. THE IL TEMPO (AND A SECOND ARTICLE IN CORRIERE DELLA SERA) TREATMENT IS BASED ON THE JAN. 15 NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE BY DREW MIDDLETON. IL TEMPO, HEADLINING "NATO BASES IN ITALY TO BE EVACUATED IF THE PCI WERE TO ENTER THE GOVERNMENT?", STRESSES THE EXISTENCE OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR SUCH AN EVENTUALITY, SPECIFYING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RAPID REMOVAL OF BASES AT LA SPEZIA, GAETA, NAPLES AND LA MADDALENA.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOME MERIT IN

REMINDING THE ITALIANS OF THE BROADER RAMIFICATIONS  
OF AN ADVENTURE WITH THE PCI, ON BALANCE THE KIND  
OF REPORTING RELATED ABOVE IS PROBABLY NOT HELPFUL.  
THERE ARE SOME SECTORS OF OPINION IN ITALY (NOT ALL  
IN THE PCI BY A LONG SHOT) WHO WOULD NOT BE UNHAPPY  
TO SEE THE US/NATO PRESENCE HERE REDUCED, IF NOT  
ENTIRELY ELIMINATED. MOREOVER, THOUGH THE ITALIANS  
NATIONALISM THRESHOLD MAY NOT BE AS LOW AS IT IS  
ELSEWHERE IN THE ALLIANCE, THERE IS A REAL RISK OF A  
PUBLICLY SUPPORTED ZACTION AGAINST WHAT MANY HERE  
WILL SEE AS A THREAT TO ITALIAN FREEDOM OF ACTION ON  
AN EMOTIONAL DOMESTIC ISSUE. ITALIAN/NATO AND ITALIAN/  
US RELATIONS WILL DOUBTLESS BE THE SUBJECT OF CONTINUING  
SPECULATION BY THE ANTI-PCI, PRO-NATO, PRO-US PRESS,  
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AS IT SEEKS TO FIND IMPEDIMENTS TO A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC  
ACCOMMODATION WITH THE PCI. IT IS A POLEMIC, HOWEVER,  
BETTER FOUGHT AMONG ITALIANS WITHOUT QUOTABLE OFFICIALS  
US AND NATO SOURCES PROVIDING THE WEAPONS. WE WOULD  
HOPE THAT, TO THE EXTENT THAT THOSE SOURCES ARE SUBJECT  
TO U.S. CONTROL OR SUSCEPTIBLE TO OUR INFLUENCE, IT  
WILL BE POSSIBLE TO DISCOURAGE FURTHER GUESSING ABOUT  
THE FUTURE OF ITALY IN NATO.GARDNER

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